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in Collaboration with
Balai Bahasa Provinsi Jawa Tengah



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“The Role of Indigenous Languages in Constructing Identity”

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NOTE

This international seminar on Language Maintenance and Shift V (LAMAS V for short) is a continuation of the previous LAMAS seminars conducted annually by the Master Program in Linguistics, Diponegoro University in cooperation with *Balai Bahasa Provinsi Jawa Tengah*.

We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to the seminar committee for putting together the seminar that gave rise to this compilation of papers. Thanks also go to the Head and the Secretary of the Master Program in Linguistics Diponegoro University, without whom the seminar would not have been possible.

The table of contents lists 92 papers presented at the seminar. Of these papers, 5 papers are presented by invited keynote speakers. They are Prof. Aron Reppmann, Ph.D. (Trinity Christian College, USA), Prof. Yudha Thianto, Ph.D. (Trinity Christian College, USA), Dr. Priyankoo Sarmah, Ph.D. (Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, India), Helena I.R. Agustien, Ph.D. (Semarang State University, Indonesia), and Dr. M. Suryadi, M.Hum. (Diponegoro University, Indonesia).

In terms of the topic areas, the papers are in sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, theoretical linguistics, antropolinguistics, pragmatics, applied linguistics, and discourse analysis.

NOTE FOR REVISED EDITION

There is a little change in this revised edition, which as the shifting of some parts of the article by Tatan Tawami and Retno Purwani Sari entitled “Sundanese Identity Represented by the Talents of *Ini Talkshow* A Study of Pragmatics” on page 166 to 167. This has an impact on the change of table of contents.

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"The Role of Indigenous Languages in Constructing Identity"

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2015					
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INFLUENTIAL FACTORS IN THE MAINTENANCE OF TAMIL LANGUAGE AMONG INDIAN SOCIETIES IN MEDAN, NORTH SUMATERA

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Abstract

The research is aimed at finding out the influential factors in the maintenance of Tamil language among Indian societies in Medan North Sumatera. It is used descriptive research by using qualitative and quantitative approach. It describes the maintenance of Tamil language among Indian speakers who lived in Medan North Sumatera.

The research was conducted in Medan North Sumatera. Methods in collecting data were observation, questionnaire and interview. Recording and note taking were used as the instruments. The samples were taken 100 of Indian societies who have been settling in Medan for a long time ago. The samples were also taken based on the age groups, such as; > 60 years old, 36-59 years old, 20-35 years old, 13-19 years old, and < 12 years old. Data were analyzed by using Linier Regression.

The result indicated that there were many factors influenced the maintenance of Tamil language among Indian societies in Medan North Sumatera namely; age, education, demography, religion, culture, and attitude. It was proved by the result of data examination which indicated that those factors had influenced significantly with the result of Regression showed p value for the whole variables were 0.000. However, bilingualism and mobility did not indicate significance results in which the p value for bilingualism variable was 0.184 and mobility was 0.720.

Keywords: influential factor, maintenance, Tamil language, Indian societies.

INTRODUCTION

Phenomena on language maintenance and language shift have become a crucial issue currently. Many researches related to those issues have been being conducting as a result of being aware toward the problem. It is important to find solution to face threat of language shift or even language death as an impact of modernization. The modern era need people to use language except their indigenous language. Interacting with other people who speak different language certainly force them to choose a language which can connect them with another.

According to Fasold (1984:213) "When a speech community begins to choose a new language in domains formerly reserved for the old one, it may be a sign that language shift is in progress. If the member of a speech community are monolingual and are collectively acquiring another language, then they are obviously maintaining their language-use-pattern. Maintenance, however, is often a characteristic of bilingual or multilingual communities as well. This only happens when the community is diglossic.

Joshua Fishman (1964) stated that language maintenance denotes the continuing use of a language in the face of competition from a regionally or socially more power language. The opposite of this term, language shift, denoted the replacement of one language by another as the primary means of communication and socialization within a community. The term language death is used when that community is the last one (in the world) to use that language. (Mesthrie, et, all (2000:253)

Related to the previous statement, this research was conducted to describe the circumstance of Tamil language which is being still spoken by its people who live in Medan North Sumatera for long time. Besides, it also describe the factors that may influence them to keep speak their native language. Holmes (192:71) says that "There are a certain social factors which seem to retard wholesale language shift for a minority language group, at least for a time. Where language is considered an important symbol of a minority group's identity, for example, the language is likely to be maintained longer.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research applied qualitative and quantitative method completed by ethnological approach. It was conducted in Medan North Sumatera where the Indian communities have settled since a long time ago

till now. In the 5th century Masehi the wave from South Indian bring Buddhism to Sumatera and introduce **Nagari script that becomes an origin of** Old Malay, Batak and other languages. Tamils were brought to Indonesia by the Dutch in the 1860s to build up their plantations. They were used as hard labor, and as the conditions were not conducive many returned in the 1940s. About 30,000 to 40,000 remained in Northern Sumatra, and as a result, there remained a concentration of Tamils in that region. Another history stated that Indian Tamil come to Medan in the beginning of 19th century in which they worked in the tobacco plantation Deli. They live in homogeneously in Kampung Madras or it is popularly known as Kampung Keling in the centre of Medan city. They practiced Hinduism as their religion but some of them practiced Moslem and form the Tamil Moslim communities. However they live in harmony and they were proud to be Tamil people so that they preserve their native language to show their identity. Based on study on 1977, there were around 3000 Indian Tamil who settled in North Sumatera and it is the most places where they like to live besides other place such as Aceh, Jawa, Kalimantan, Sulawesi.

Observation was used to observe the daily life of Indian Tamils in Medan city while questionnaire and interview were used to find out the data related to the influential factors in maintaining Tamil language. Recording and note taking were used as the instruments. The samples were taken 100 of Indian societies who have been settling in Medan for a long time ago. It is used multi stage sampling that were taken from 3 generations based on 4 categorization of age group The samples were also taken based on the age groups, such as; > 60 years old, 36-59 years old, 20-35 years old, 13-19 years old, and < 12 years old. Data were analyzed by using Linier Regression.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Based on the data from questionnaire, the research found that the factors that influence the maintenance of Tamil language discussed as follows:

FINDINGS

Having analyzed the data, it is found out the result of Linier Regression such as:

Independent variables	Dependent variable	p-value	explanation
Mobility	Language Maintenance of Tamil Language	0.713	insignificant
Religion		0.000	significant
Culture		0.003	significant
Attitude		0.000	Significant

DISCUSSIONS

- Mobility

Mobility is the frequency of Indian Tamil visit their family in their homeland or other places and meet their own fellows. As the Indian immigrant mostly spread along the South East Asian, they have family who live in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur. Therefore some of them regularly visit their family there in spending holiday and vacation. When they meet family they certainly speak their native language. This condition can support them in maintaining their language. The result of multiple regression analysis for mobility variable (X1) in hypothesis testing indicates that p. value is 0.713. It reveals that mobility as independent variable influences insignificantly the Tamil maintenance in Medan.

Generally, mobility will be more influential in language shift, because the more people visit other area, the more they will use other languages. Since Tamil people usually visit family in Malaysia an Singapore or other place that are still located in Indonesia, it will strengthen their need to speak their native language. In fact, they seldom even never visit their homeland India as it is far from Indonesia and need more funds to go back. This is in line with Romaine (1989:40) finds in her study. She finds out that ties with homeland is one of the external factor in language maintenance. Besides she also find out some others, those are; social class, religious, educational background, settlement patterns, degree of similarity between minority and majority, extent of exogamous marriage, attitudes of majority and minority, government policy toward language and education of minorities, and pattern of language use.

- Religion

Religion is also one factor that contribute to the use of the language when practicing religious activities. The religious activities that usually celebrating by Tamil in Medan is *Depaavali* that intend to happily welcome the return of Rama and Shinta to Ayodya Kingdom from their exile for 14 years, together with Hanoman having defeated Alengka Kingdom with the King Rahwana. Another activities they always do is *Ciwaratri* is offering night to God Shiva. Although the priest use Tamil language in delivering the speech, they also mix with Bahasa Indonesia by considering that some of Indian Tamil do not understand the language as well Bahasa Indonesia, especially for the Indian youth and Indian children. It is commonly occurred in the language shift issue that youth and children are the group age who usually seldom even never speak their native language in their daily activity.

Likewise, in testing hypothesis 2 reveals that there is correlation between religion and language maintenance in Medan. It can be proved from the result of *multiple regression* analysis for religion variable (X2) as independent variable shows that p value is 0.000. This means that religion variable (X2) influences significantly toward the maintenance of Tamil language (Y).

The result of this study is supported by Mesthrie et. al (2000) who state that the use of minority language in education, religion, and the media or administration may assist attempts to bolster its position. The important role of religion as one factor in language maintenance is also supported by the study conducted by Schrauf (1999) where he revealed that residential pattern and religious practice are the principle factors for accounting mother tongue maintenance into the third generation.

- Culture

As the Indian Tamil practiced Hinduism, there are also some cultural activities conducted where those are involved life and death. The activities that related to the birth ceremony namely *walai kappu* and *pathinaru*. Thus, when their children experience to their puberty they also conduct *sedengesathe orwaisuki wanthepnn*. The marriage ceremony in Indian Tamil is called *thirumanam* initiated from proposing the girl (*niscchayam*) engaging (*parisam*), and marriage (*thirumanam*). Finally, the cultural activities they conducted is death ceremony. When doing all activities, they mostly use Tamil language so that this activity give a opportunity to them to speak Tamil language more. Consequently the existence of the language can be preserved.

The result of *multiple regression* analysis for culture variable (X3) as independent variable shows that p value is 0.003. This means that culture variable (X3) contribute significantly toward the Tamil maintenance. This study almost similar to the case of Bali language where both of them practice the similar religion namely Hinduism. Therefore some activities also conducted similarly in both culture as it is explained previously. The study also revealed the same result such as; the contributing factors in maintaining the Bali language in transmigration area Sukamaju North Luwu were; age, education, religion, culture, mobility, bilingualism and attitude (Djamereng, 2012)

When conducting the cultural ceremonies they always combine with their tradition in which they have to obey. Therefore Tamil culture is as unique as Bali culture and difference from other culture. Thus, the activities that they practiced as pure cultural activities were traditional dance and drama, traditional songs and traditional game. These activities usually conducted separately from the ritual ceremonies and it is just performed for entertainment only, for example; Indian drama dance and arts.

- Attitude

Based the result of questionnaire and interview, Indian Tamil has positive attitude to their identity as Indian race. They are proud to be Tamil people so it makes them to preserve their language. Another intention of using of Tamil language because they may feel very disclosed when they use their native to their fellows. They also very agree if the language always used in all cultural and religious activities. Besides they also like to watch Indian movies and listening to Indian song from television or radio. It can make them feel so close to the land of their ancestry. The result of data analysis proves that the attitude of Tamil societies in Medan were positive. It can be seen from their responses toward the question very positive for all age groups.

The result of multiple regression analysis for attitude as independent variable (X4) shows that p value is 0.000. It indicates that there is a significant contribution of attitude toward the language maintenance of Tamil language in Medan city.

The study also in line with Lawson (2004) who examined another varieties of Indian language which is used in UK such as ; the use of Bengali and Sylheti among the use of English majority language in London UK. It portrayed how Bengali and Sylheti could be preserved in some borders. The higher use of Bengali was most commonly reported as being used with older family members that included other younger and older relatives. While in other side, among Sylheti-Bangladeshi adolescences in London Sylheti use was reported to be at very low levels in all setting (public, home, school, other). English use was reported to be at very high levels in all settings except home. English also become dominant language in interactions with younger relatives, friends, and others.

CONCLUSION

- Mobility is one of influential factors in the maintenance of Tamil language although the result is not as significant as religion, culture and attitude. The result of multiple regression analysis where p-value is 0.713. It indicates that mobility of Tamil people to visit other place may influence their use of Tamil language to be more intensive.
- Religion highly influenced the maintenance of the Tamil language in Medan, North Sumatera. It is proved by the result of multiple regression analysis where p-value is 0.000, it means that religion influences significantly toward language use of the Tamil immigrant in Medan city.
- Culture also contributes to the maintenance of the Tamil language in Medan, North Sumatera. The result of multiple regression analysis for this variable shows that p-value is 0.003. It indicates that culture influences significantly the language maintenance of Tamil language in Medan, North Luwu.
- Attitude also put a high position of influential factor in maintaining the language. It can be proved from the result of p-value is 0.000 means that there is a significant influence of attitude toward the maintenance on Tamil language among Indian immigrant in Medan, North Sumatera.

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